

Asbestos conference in Missoula June 24-25

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The University of Montana Center for Environmental Health Sciences will hold a conference in Missoula on Monday and Tuesday, June 24-25, 2002, to present "cutting-edge" research on all aspects of asbestos-related diseases.

The conference, "New Directions and Needs in Asbestos Research," features national and international asbestos experts who will lead four scientific sessions followed by panel discussions. The sessions and panel discussions run from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday and Tuesday. Lunch will be provided.

Ken Olden, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, will give the keynote address.

According to Andrij Holian, director of The University of Montana Center for Environmental Health Sciences, "This conference will be the first in Montana that will be directed to improving our understanding of the mechanisms of asbestos-related diseases with a focus on the unique form of asbes-

tos associated with the mine in Libby."

Tremolite asbestos was a natural by-product in the mining and milling of vermiculite insulation at the W.R. Grace & Co. mine near Libby.

"The results of this conference will help focus research in order to expedite biomedical research aimed at these lung diseases," said Mr. Holian.

The conference begins Monday morning, June 24, with an overview of asbestos-related health and epidemiologic issues that stem from investigations of exposure in Libby, where vermiculite was mined from 1923 until 1990. Presenters and panel members then will delve into the mechanisms of chronic disease development and the use of genomic approaches in asbestos research.

Sessions close Tuesday afternoon, June 25, with a summary of conference recommendations for new directions and needs in asbestos research.

Conference registration fees are \$175 for the general public, \$75 for post-doctoral investigators and students, and \$35 for UM faculty and staff. Information about special rates for lodging in Missoula for

persons who attend the conference is available.

To register, call 1-406-243-4048. The conference is co-sponsored by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences,

the Environmental Protection Agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, and the National Science Foundation-EPSCoR.

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